



## Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting Summary: June 8, 2020

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**Attendees:** Alicia Lieberman, Amelia Soto, Antoinette Jacobs, Carola Oliva-Olson, Cheryl Polk, Dean Tagawa, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio, Kim Patillo Brownson, Kimberley Johnson, Khydeeya Alam Javid, Lupe Jaime, Mayra E. Alvarez, Miren Algorri, Nadine Burke Harris, Natali Gaxiola, Patrick MacFarlane, Paula Merrigan, Robin Layton, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Scott Moore, Sheryl Shushan, Sonia Jaramillo, Stephanie Myers, Tonia McMillian, Virginia Eigen, Yenni Rivera

### 1. Welcome and Introductions (Chair Burke Harris)

- In her opening remarks, Chair Nadine Burke Harris acknowledged the painful impact that recent events have had on the lives of all Californians. The state is grappling with a pandemic, but also struggling with the confluence of peaceful protests and civil unrest. She reminded the Council of the importance of their work and the opportunity it presents to move the state and our country forward through thoughtful, anti-racist policies and plans to make our state more empathetic and more inclusive.
- Chair Nadine Burke Harris encouraged members of the public to continue providing input outside of official ECPC meetings by submitting all suggestions, advice, recommendations or questions to the ECPC email address ([ECPC@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:ECPC@chhs.ca.gov)).

### 2. Master Plan for Early Learning and Care

- Master Plan for Early Learning and Care team members Jannelle Kubinec and Lupita Alcalá presented an update on the plan's development and to gather feedback on ideas within the plan that are taking shape. The events of the past few months have pressure tested California's early childhood system. The team recognized the impact of racial inequities in the form of higher unemployment, COVID-19 related illness and death, housing instability, and segregation of young children by race, language and ability in class and the critical role the Master Plan plays in addressing systemic inequities.
- Building on prior reports and recommendations, the Master Plan team presented a draft vision for a system anchored in advancing equity, attending to the needs of our most vulnerable families, engaging families as partners, respecting childcare providers and using a whole child approach. The team engaged the Council and member of the public in a series of poll questions to help inform the vision, values and priorities for the plan given our current landscape. The team facilitated a rich discussion with Council members to gather feedback on the Master Plan's approach.
- Through this discussion, Council members expressed concern about the process for collecting information and questioned whose voice and feedback was being heard by the Council. The Master Plan team assured the Council that they will be more diligent in soliciting input from the Council on an ongoing basis.
- The full Master Plan for Early Learning and Care Presentation can be found on the official [Early Childhood Policy Council Website](#)

A high-level, thematic summary of Council discussion and public comments received during the meeting can be found in the following pages.



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### **Summary of Comments from the Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting**

This Summary provides themes and illustrative quotes from participants in the Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting on June 8, 2020.

The Early Childhood Policy Council is an advisory body to the Governor, Legislature, and Superintendent of Public Instruction on statewide early learning, care, and child development. It will provide recommendations on all aspects of the state's early childhood system, including support for the demographic, geographic, and economic diversity of the state's children and families and ways the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Early Childhood Education's (ECE) final report can be updated and improved.

### **Summary of Comments and Questions by ECPC Council Members and the Public**

The themes included:

- Equity
- Rejecting State Budget Cuts to Early Care and Education Programs
- Supporting Workforce Development through Livable Wages
- Concerns about ECPC Meeting Process
- Collaborations that Support Pre-K to Kinder Transitions
- System Alignment to Support Continuity of Care
- Access to Mental Health Services for Providers
- Support for the California Early Childhood Mentor Program

#### **Equity**

Incorporating equity, connected to funding, was important for members of the public and the council. They reaffirmed their stance on including equity and the whole child in the vision and values.

#### **Rejecting State Budget Cuts to Early Care and Education Programs**

The council and the public voiced strong Opposition to proposed rate cuts due to impacts on providers, families, children, and the community.

#### **Supporting Workforce Development through Livable Wages**

Comments provided by members of the council and public emphasized the need to strengthen the workforce and support providers to increase and strengthen the quality of care.



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#### Concerns about ECPC Meeting Process

Members of the public expressed concern about the process for collecting information and questioned whose voice and feedback was being heard by the council.

#### Collaborations that Support Pre-K to Kinder Transitions

Members of the public called attention to the need for a system that supports the transition of students from Pre-K to Kindergarten.

#### System Alignment to Support Continuity of Care

Participants of the meeting engaged in a discussion about the need for systems alignment in order to ensure and facilitate the continuity of care.

#### Access to Mental Health Services for Providers

Access to mental health services was also discussed as vital for providers.

#### Support for the California Early Childhood Mentor Program

Public comment included statements in support of the California Early Childhood Mentor Program.

### **Select Quotes Supporting the Themes Identified Above**

#### Equity

- “We applaud the framework of a whole child, whole family, equity approach.”
- “Equity is not attainable without proper funding.”
- “I feel like equity should be a frame and a thread throughout the values and highlighted.”
- “We can't miss the opportunity to include in this plan a commitment to address the social, economic, and racial segregation prevalent in our child care and early learning system - and clearly outline related action steps for real systemic change.”
- “Equity is not just addressing inequities that [have] already been created, but the promise of early childhood is that we can actually... prevent some of the inequities.”

#### Rejecting State Budget Cuts to Early Care and Education Programs

- “We say that we want to re-open our state, but yet we aim to further starve the one program that has been so vital to keeping our communities safe with a 10% cut to providers like us who are barely making it as is.”
- “Cutbacks from the state could lead to a decrease in access to quality child care. These restrictions to funding and abilities to serve our families are going to lose many wonderful providers and leave children and families with substandard care at best.”
- “This is a system that has largely been subsidized on the backs of low-income women of color... I don't believe we can ask these women to do more with less and to raise



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their practice and to continue to improve quality when their own livelihood and ability to support their own family is at risk.”

- “Either the providers close their programs, or the families will be forced to pay for the difference. Either way how does this support or promote equity? We understand that we face a budget deficit, but we cannot continue to balance our budget on the backs of the black, brown and the white working poor.”
- “I think that activities and priorities for the Master Plan for the near term is addressing the budget gap given the 10% reduction.”
- “I feel like we need to come as a body and come in strongly against any cuts to childcare.”

### Supporting Workforce Development through Livable Wages

- “Workforce Development is also an important aspect that needs to be addressed such as living wage, continual education to improve quality.”
- “We spend so much of our time proving our quality and nothing is being done to improve our own quality of life.”
- “Preserve the current workforce by ensuring a livable wage.”
- “While career development and professional learning and support are needed, neither of those matters if the compensation is not enough to keep educators in the field. Compensation needs to come first.”
- “Compensation is of the utmost importance. In order to have quality care we need to be able to retain and recruit care providers. People need to be able to live and not work multiple jobs to afford to live.”
- “Until California puts funding toward our career field, changes will come about very slowly.”

### Concerns about ECPC Meeting Process

- “I urge you to remain steadfast, composed and diligent in this quest.”
- “I find this very, very detached from the heart of communities, and how they are capable of designing their own solutions.”
- “How are you involving the community in your plans? Each community has benefits and struggles that are unique to their families, children and educators.”
- “Where is the voice of the teachers? What work did you do gather the data from teachers?”
- “How is the community being engaged in the process of developing the master plan and even responding to the plan throughout its development?”
- “Is there any reason why the Plan development process, timelines, stakeholder engagement plan can’t be published on the website so council members and the public at large so there is transparency?”  
“I am concerned that where we are with what is being put forward lacks a bit of transparency about how we got to here.”



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### Transitions

- “Ensure that information is readily available to administrators and those making decisions when the little ones walk into kinder.”
- “With the proposed move of programs out of the California Department of Education, it is very important to continue to value the linkages, transition, coordination, and alignment between early education and K-12 education so we don't take one step forward and two steps back with the new Master Plan.”

### System Alignment to Support Continuity of Care

- “To make sure that we're aligning with our larger systems so that those kids and families continue to get that care.”
- “Whether you're thinking about social workers, pediatricians, mental health therapists... they also need to be respected and considered part of that care team to support the well-being of children.”

### Access to Mental Health Services for Providers

- “We need to make sure our childcare providers are getting their mental health needs met as well during this pandemic.”
- “Lest we forget when we are talking about trauma informed care and practices we must also remember we have a workforce that has experienced generational trauma as well. Our educators need support for mental wellness too.”

### Support for the California Early Childhood Mentor Program

- “The Mentor Program allows for consistency as well as individual regions to respond to the needs of their community in terms of Mentoring, for both classroom teachers and directors.”
- “Compensation and retention are a main component of this program. Quality is the main focus of this program. It creates equity for our providers and children and families.”
- “Recruitment and retention are supported by the California Early Childhood Mentor Program. This is exactly what we have in place now. It is also cost efficient.”